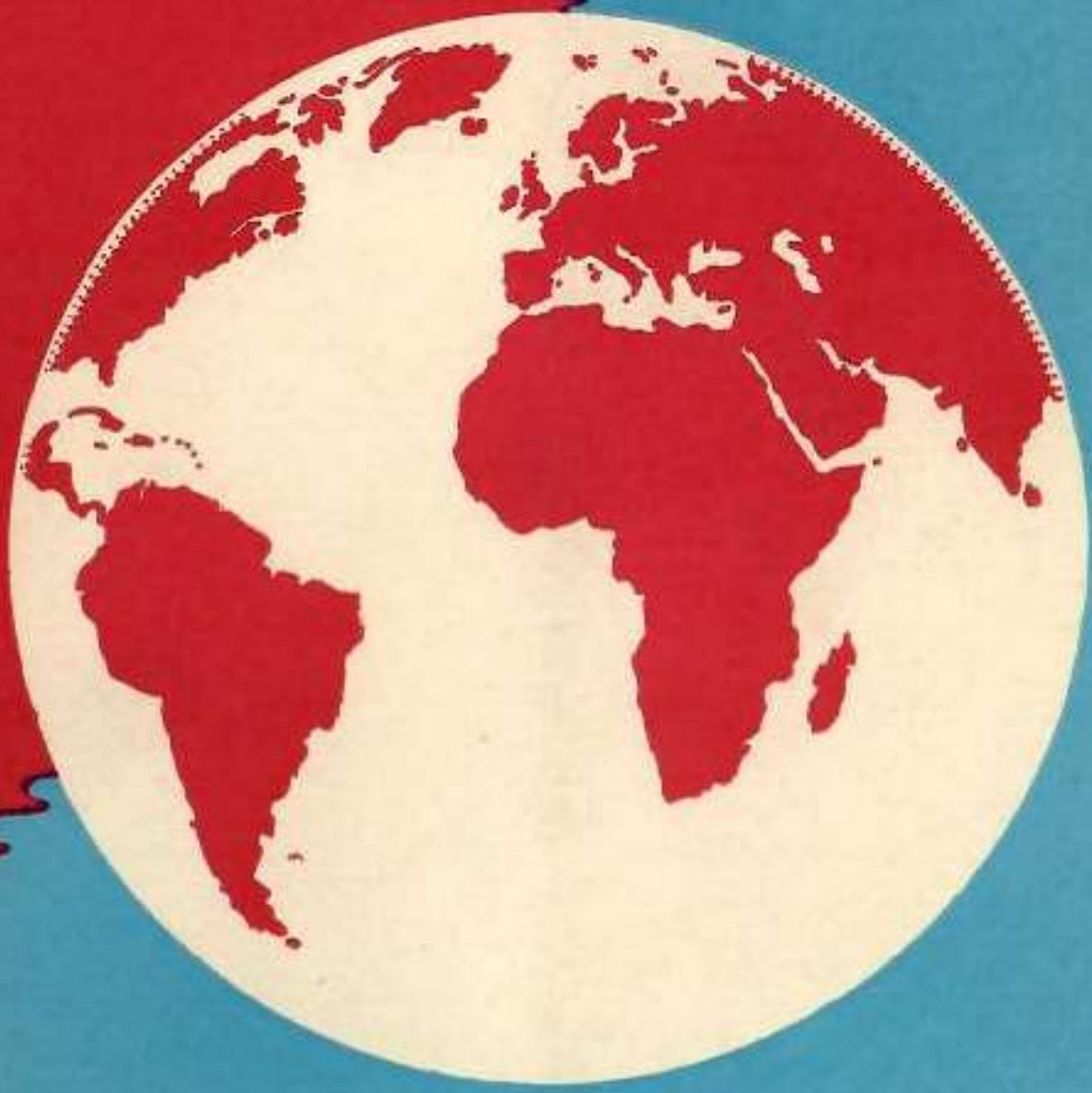
WORLD CHRISTIAN BOOKS

THE CROSS IS HEAVEN



A. J. APPASAMY

THE CROSS IS HEAVEN

This book brings to life the great Indian Christian mystic Sadhu Sundar Singh. Here is the simple, vital message of one of the outstanding saints of the world Church in this century.

WORLD CHRISTIAN BOOKS
No. 13

2s. 6d. net

World Christian Books

A SERIES OF BOOKS COVERING THE WHOLE RANGE OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH IN THE MODERN WORLD

Edited by Bishop Stephen Neill

Sponsored by the International Missionary Council in co-operation with the Christian Literature Council of Great Britain and the Committee on World Literacy and Christian Literature of the United States, and the Department of Overseas Missions of the Canadian Council of Churches. Published by the United Society for Christian Literature and the Lutterworth Press, London.

WORLD CHRISTIAN BOOKS
No. 13

THE CROSS IS HEAVEN

The Life and Writings
of Sadhu Sundar Singh

edited by

A. J. APPASAMY, D.PHIL., D.D.
Bishop in Coimbatore

UNITED SOCIETY FOR CHRISTIAN LITERATURE
LUTTERWORTH PRESS
London

INTRODUCTION

The life and teaching of Sundar Singh are of great value to the world Church. To-day we are thinking in terms of a world Church into which different nations can bring their special gifts. While the Gospel of Jesus Christ is of universal significance, different nations tend to emphasize different aspects of this Gospel. It does us all good to pool the various interpretations of Christianity which are being made to-day in many lands. They show us how rich the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is.

In his childhood Sundar Singh received of the best that India could give him by way of life and culture. He was born on September 3, 1889, in the village of Rampur in the Punjab. His father was well-to-do and owned extensive wheat fields. He was brought up in real comfort. His parents were Sikhs in their religion, Sikhism being originally a blend of the best in Hinduism and in Islam. It sought to worship the one God without idolatry and caste. But in Sundar Singh's home Hinduism played as important a part as the Sikh religion. His mother was a deeply religious woman, and taught him from early childhood to worship God and to be devoted to Him. She rose up early in the morning and read the *Bhagavad Gita* and other Scriptures. She always insisted on Sundar saying his prayers in the morning before

he had his food. In these early days she herself gave him all the religious instruction she could. She used to teach him that he should become a Sadhu, a holy man who renounces the world and follows God fully. In after years Sundar Singh often said that his mother made him a Sadhu but the Holy Spirit made him a Christian.

When he grew up, Sundar's mother handed him over to a Hindu Pandit and a Hindu Sadhu for further spiritual instruction. His Hindu teachers taught him the *Bhagavad Gita*—by the age of seven he knew the whole of it by heart. They also taught him some of the essential doctrines of Hindu philosophy, particularly that God is the only Reality and that all of us are one with Him. When Sundar, not satisfied with this teaching, pressed to know how best he could get the peace for which his soul longed, they tried to put him off by saying that when he grew older he would understand these things better; but he said, "How can you ask a boy who is hungry to wait for bread until he grows up? He needs bread immediately to satisfy his hunger." Besides listening to the religious instruction given to him by his teachers, he pored day and night over the sacred Scriptures of different religions, often sitting up until midnight for the purpose. His father would rebuke him and say to him, "What is this madness? You will be only ruining your health and your eyesight by reading so long and so late in the night. Boys of your age spend their time playing games and don't study like this." There was at Rampur a school of the American Presbyterian Mission and Sundar was sent to it,

but he hated the religion of Jesus Christ as it was a foreign religion. He reached a spiritual crisis when he saw a vision of Christ and became His follower. Let him tell the story of his conversion in his own words:

> I found nothing in Hindu philosophy. Only in Jesus Christ, whom I used to hate, I found peace. I was spiritually blind, but in Him I found what I had been seeking for a long time. I shall never forget that day, December 16, 1904, when I burnt the Bible in the fire and my father said: "Why are you doing such a foolish thing?" I said, "The Western religion is false; we must destroy it." So I destroyed the Bible and thought I had done my duty. On the third day I saw the power of the Living Christ. That third day I was going to commit suicide because I had no peace in my heart. I woke up in the early morning; it was winter, and I took a cold bath. Then I began to pray, but not to the Christ of Christianity, because I hated Christianity, but I prayed like an atheist for I had lost my faith in God. I said, "If there be a God, you must show me the way of salvation or I will commit suicide." From 3 to 4.30 early in the morning I was praying. About 5 I was going to commit suicide by placing my head on the railway line, so I had only half an hour more. Then something happened which I never expected; the room was filled with a wonderful light. I saw a glorious figure standing in the room. I thought it was Buddha, Krishna or some other saint whom I used to worship and was quite prepared to worship him, but I was surprised to hear these words: "How long are you going to persecute me? I died for thee. For thee I gave my life." I could not understand, could not speak a single word. And then I saw the scars of the Living Christ, whom I thought of as a great man who used to live in Palestine and was now

dead; but I found He was living, the Living Christ, not dead and gone. I was now prepared to worship Him. I saw His loving face. Though I had burnt the Bible the day before yesterday, He was not angry. I was changed. There I knew the Living Christ, the Saviour of the world, and my heart was full of joy and peace which I cannot express. When I got up, He had disappeared. I went to tell my father. He could not believe it. "Only the day before yesterday you burnt the Bible. How can it be that you are now a Christian?" "Because now I have seen His power; He is the Living Christ. It was not in imagination that I saw Him, because before the vision I hated Him and did not worship Him. If it had been Buddha, you might say it was imagination because I used to worship him. It was not a dream. After taking a cold bath nobody can dream. There was reality, the Living Christ."

At first Sundar Singh's relations did not take seriously his account of the vision which he had seen of Jesus Christ and of his resolution to become His follower. They felt that it would be a very great dishonour to his family if he became a Christian. They sought to persuade him to give up this idea. When their soft words of love and reasoning failed, they threatened him with many harsh and cruel things. He cut off his hair, which as a Sikh he had worn long, to show that he was really giving up the Sikh religion; then they cast him out. But before he left some poison had been mixed in his food. When he reached the house of a Christian friend for refuge, the poison which had been given to him began to work and he was nearly dying. The doctor who came to see him refused to give him any medicine, for he said that

if the boy died he would be blamed. But Sundar was quite sure that he would recover, and so he did. When the doctor saw this, he was so deeply impressed that after two years he himself became a Christian and a minister of the Gospel.

Sundar Singh was sent by the missionaries to study in the High School run by the American Presbyterian Mission at Ludhiana. He could not be baptized, as he was only fifteen at that time, and the law in India laid down that only after a non-Christian boy reached the age of sixteen could he be baptized.

On September 2, 1905, he was sent with a letter of introduction to a C.M.S. missionary, the Rev. J. Redman of Simla. Mr. Redman examined the boy carefully. He was deeply impressed by the knowledge which Sundar already possessed of the life and teaching of Christ. He felt sure that Sundar was really sincere, and that he had already had some personal experience of Christ as his Saviour. The boy said that even if he was not baptized he would go out and preach; so strong was the urge within him to proclaim the name of Jesus. Sundar Singh was baptized by Mr. J. Redman at St. Thomas' Church in Simla on September 3, 1905, the exact date on which he completed his sixteenth year.

Sundar Singh had for many years wanted to be a Sadhu, as his mother had always urged him. Now after his baptism he decided to become a Christian Sadhu, and began this life on October 6, 1905, thirty-three days after his baptism. He decided that he would travel from place to place preaching Christ, and that he would not receive

any money for this work. If food was offered to him he would partake of it; otherwise he would go hungry. He would sleep in a house if he was invited to do so; otherwise he would sleep under a tree or in a cave. He followed this ideal faithfully in the early years of his ministry; particularly where his name was not known he had often to go hungry or to sleep in caves. Even in the coldest weather he wore his thin cotton yellow robe. He travelled in this costume throughout the world.

From August, 1906, to November, 1907, Sundar Singh worked in the company of S. E. Stokes, a wealthy young American who had fallen under the spell of the ideal of a friar as seen in the life of Jesus and of St. Francis of Assisi. Both Sundar Singh and Stokes ministered where there was plague, leprosy, cholera and famine. Stokes has given a brief but interesting glimpse of Sundar Singh at that time:

Although he is scarcely more than a boy, he has suffered hunger, cold, sickness and even imprisonment for his Master. We had been some hundreds of miles back into the interior, and had been forced to pass through some very unhealthy country. Sundar Singh was attacked by fever day after day, and also by acute indigestion. At length one night when we were trudging alone he became so bad that he could no longer walk and fell fainting on the road. Our way ran through the mountains and there was a bank by the side of it. To this I dragged him and set him against it in such a way that his head might be higher than his feet. He was trembling with the chill which preceded the fever, and his face was drawn with the pain caused by his stomach trouble. I was anxious because we were alone and on foot and the weather

was very cold. Bending close to his ear I asked him how he was feeling. I knew that he would never complain, but I was unprepared for the answer which I received. He opened his eyes and smiled absently, then in a voice almost too low to be heard, said, "I am very happy; how sweet it is to suffer for His sake."

From 1909 to 1911 C. F. Andrews, who was at that time a professor in St. Stephen's College in Delhi, went to Kotgarh on the Simla Hills each year for the hot weather. There he came into close and intimate contact with Sundar Singh, who also went there during the summer months to get some rest between his incessant preaching tours. Their friendship ripened and continued to the end of Sundar Singh's life. Andrews has given several interesting glimpses of Sundar and his work, particularly during these early years when he was unknown to fame. He has described the impressive service of Confirmation which Bishop Lefroy of Lahore took in the year 1907 in the small Christian Church at Kotgarh. On the Sunday morning the village congregation stood in the open sunshine to receive the Bishop. The rain had ceased and the air was pure and blue. There was a striking note of peace in the service. All the confirmation candidates were clad in white, and came forward one by one to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands. The last to be confirmed was Sundar Singh. His face shone with firm conviction and bright energy when the Bishop shook hands with him after the service and wished him God's blessing.

I give here some examples of the way in which Sundar Singh carried on his ministry during

those early years. One night at Kotgarh he rose from prayer and was getting ready to go out alone. There were many dangers in walking through the forest at that time of the night. His friends urged him to wait until the early dawn. Sundar Singh did not listen to their advice but insisted on starting at that hour of the night. When he returned after an absence of a few days, he said that the person he had gone to see had been seriously ill and had greatly needed his assistance. This implicit obedience to the call of the Holy Spirit, regardless of consequence, was characteristic of Sundar Singh's whole life as a Christian.

During term time he would go to St. Stephen's College in Delhi and spend some time there. The Christian students in the hostel often sat talking with him until late at night. He was young like themselves and his brave spirit made a strong appeal to them. One of the students, a cricketer and athlete, chose direct Christian work in preference to the attractions of Government service. Another student decided to become a minister in the Church of Christ and to live a life of service and prayer. One of the college sweepers fell ill. Normally the students would have paid no attention to him because he was an "untouchable", but a man who had come much under the influence of the Sadhu lived with him in the sweepers' quarters and nursed him during his illness.

Andrews makes it clear that, as a Sikh boy in rural surroundings, Sundar Singh had come to believe implicitly in the supernatural. His own

temperament, with the long spells of prayer and meditation in which he was engaged, confirmed his early beliefs. It was easy for him to be sure that God was all the time working miracles to deliver his devotees from persecution and death. In other words, he lived continually in a land of dreams, visions and miracles, and he was often unable to distinguish between the thoughts and visions he had and the happenings in the external world. He was inclined to believe that his dreams and visions had actually occurred in life and had not merely taken place in his own mind.

In 1909 Bishop Lefroy sent Sundar to study theology in St. John's Divinity School in Lahore with a view to ordination. Sundar Singh loved Bishop Lefroy deeply and out of respect for him agreed to go. But he did not fit into the life in the Divinity School. He found his life there too filled with intellectual pursuits, and not allowing enough time for sitting at the feet of Christ in prayer. He felt certain that he could learn far more of the Christian faith by such prayerful approach to the Author of that faith than by the study of any number of learned books. His fellow-students had not caught his vision of Christ and did not quite understand the ideal of service and sacrifice which he sought to follow. Andrews says that Sundar Singh was like a bird of the forest which had been put into a cage. He missed the joyous, open freedom at Kotgarh, with the peace and solitude of the hills, and was not altogether happy. When the question arose as to whether Sundar Singh would be free to preach in any Christian Church and to receive Holy

Communion there, the Bishop told him clearly that he could not do this. He could only minister in the Churches of the Anglican Communion. Sundar Singh felt that this was not in accordance with the universal character of Christ's Church. So after much thought and prayer he left the Divinity School, having been there less than eight months.

Later he thus described his life in St. John's Divinity School:

> I learnt many useful and interesting things no doubt, but they were not of much spiritual profit. There were discussions about sects, about Jesus Christ and many other interesting things, but I found the reality, the spirit of all these things, only at the Master's feet. When I spent hours at His feet in prayer, then I found enlightenment, and God taught me so many things that I cannot express them even in my own language. Sit at the Master's feet in prayer; it is the greatest Theological College in this world. We know *about* theology, but He is the source of theology itself. He explains in a few seconds a truth that has taken years to understand. Whatever I have learnt has been learnt only at His feet.

From the year 1912 Sundar Singh began to visit Tibet regularly. He had come to know that the preaching of the Gospel was forbidden in Tibet and that Christian evangelists were likely to be persecuted and martyred. This made an immediate appeal to him. But he found that he could walk about easily in Tibet only during the months of April, May and June. During the other months there was heavy snow. So he decided that he would work on the plains of India during nine months of the year, and for the other three months

preach the Gospel in Tibet and in Himalayan States like Nepal, in which also the preaching of the Gospel was not allowed. He seems to have visited Tibet like this for eight years running. Fortunately we have his own reports of these evangelistic tours, originally written in Urdu and published in a Christian paper called *Nur Afshan*. Besides the possibility of persecution and martyrdom (which Sundar Singh coveted so earnestly), there were many hardships and dangers on account of climate, robbers, and steep, narrow paths. Sundar Singh felt that he must suffer like this for the sake of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who came down to the world and suffered on the Cross for our salvation.

With a Tibetan companion named T. Nasib Ali, Sundar Singh started from Poo on March 9, 1912, for Shipke, about 15,400 feet high. The way was blocked with snow and they could not go there. They proceeded instead to Tashigang where a Head Lama resided. They had to cross the river Sutlej by means of a straw shaft which swayed to and fro and made them feel giddy. Sundar Singh had a great deal of courage and passed over the river with much ease on this dangerous device. Then they had to walk for about five miles, steadily climbing the mountains. The wind was so chilly that their hands and faces became as cold as ice and they could not speak even a single word. The Head Lama received them warmly and invited the people to come together to hear Sundar Singh; he preached to them, and Nasib Ali acted as his interpreter. The address lasted three hours.

But not all the Lamas were so friendly. Sundar Singh reports that on one occasion he was put into a dry well, where he suffered much, for having preached the Gospel against the orders of the Government. This incident must have taken place sometime in 1912.

I often remember that day when, for preaching the Gospel in Tibet, I was thrown into a deep well. For three days I was in that well, without food or water. The door was locked and it was quite dark. There was nothing but dead bodies and bones in that well. It was like Hell. There I was tempted: "Is your Christ going to save you, now you have been put into this prison?" But I remember a wonderful peace and joy came to me in those hours of persecution, when my arm was broken, and there was such a bad smell. That Hell seemed Heaven. I felt the presence of the Living Christ. He is always with us as He has promised. I never thought that I could have any Cross with this kind of peace, but there I had that experience. After that there was a wonderful thing. I was thinking that my time had come and I would be called to Heaven, when somebody opened the door. I could see no one. Then I knew that a wonderful power had delivered me. Perhaps someone will think that this was a dream, or that somebody set me free from that well, but the man who made me free, who touched my arm—it was all right in a few minutes—was no human being. A human being could not do that, only the power of God. Now I preach, not because I know Christ through what is written about Him, but because I know Him from my own experience. He is the Living Saviour. If Jesus Christ were not the Living Christ, then I would not be preaching the Gospel.

On November 12, 1912, Sundar Singh was preaching in Harrison Road in the City of Calcutta. Twelve Hindu Pandits were passing that way and listened to the street preaching. One of them cried out and said that Christ was actually the *Nish Kalank Avatar* (immaculate incarnation), and that they would like to become His humble servants and disciples. They had studied the sacred Vedas in Benares, and for a long time had wanted to find out whether the Hindu or the Christian religion were the means of salvation. Four of these Pandits openly said in the bazaar that they were Christians at heart. Three days later they met Sundar Singh and had a conversation with him for three hours on the subject of religion. He felt sure that in course of time they would become Christians. In 1915, three years later, he wrote that several of them had done so.

For some years Sundar Singh had had the desire to undertake a fast of forty days as his Lord and Saviour had done. So, sometime towards the end of January, 1913, he went to Rishi Kesh. Near there, there is a forest known as Tapoban in which crowds of Hindu ascetics from all over India are engaged in performing different kinds of austerities. Beyond Tapoban there is another forest known as Kajliban. The forest in Kajliban is so thick that only bamboo cutters generally go there. Sundar Singh sought the seclusion of this forest. In this dense jungle wild animals lived, but he does not seem to have been afraid of them. After several days of fasting, he became so weak that he had to lie down and was too

feeble to move. Two of the woodcutters who saw him in this state put him on his blanket and took him to Rishi Kesh, carrying him with a bamboo pole. From Rishi Kesh he was taken by train and then by cart to the village of Annfield, where some Christians nursed him and took care of him. He was so weak from his fast that a man had to hold him up; he could not even speak on the first day. Only on the second day did he begin to speak. He was given milk, then soup and sago, and only after eight or ten days was he given bread. The following account given by Sundar Singh of his fast is both interesting and valuable:

> After several years of service I felt guided to go into some forest where, free from any kind of interruption, I could have a forty days' fast and ask for blessing on the past work and power for the future. When I first commenced the fast, for several days I experienced great hardship. Afterwards it was not at all difficult. But the blood dried up to such an extent that I altogether lost the power of sight and speech. I could hear nothing, and by reason of weakness could not even turn myself. But certainly my intellectual powers were sharpened several times over, from which I gathered proof of the true fact that the soul is an entity that cannot cease to exist when the body dies, but goes on living. In that condition I experienced the presence of God and the fullness of the Spirit, which cannot be expressed in words. In that condition too I had a vision of the Lord in a glorious form, from which I gained the conviction that now He would assuredly keep me alive to serve Him for some time.

There has been much controversy about the length of his fast. We can only speculate about

its length, as many of the relevant facts are not available. After considering carefully all the information at our disposal I am inclined to say that he probably fasted for twenty-three days. Whatever the duration of the fast, we have ample evidence to say that the fast marked a turning point in his spiritual life. Some of his doubts and difficulties were cleared and he was richly strengthened for a new period of service.

In June, 1914, he proceeded to the state of Nepal in order to preach the Gospel there. He heard that a Nepali Christian, Mr. Budi Singh, had established a small hospital in Nepal and preached daily to the patients who came there for medical treatment. He was turned out from the State at twenty-four hours' notice and the officials issued strict orders forbidding Christians to enter the State; if any Christian came in, he was liable to rigorous imprisonment for six months. When Sundar Singh heard of this he was greatly disappointed. But when he opened the Bible after prayer he read, "Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut" (Revelation 3 : 8). Then his heart became full of joy and he began to sing "Onward, Christian Soldiers". He wrote in his report that they seized him in Nepal and threw him into prison:

> They took off all my clothes and fastened my hands and feet in a block of wood,* and bringing a lot of leeches left them near to me; from outside they threw filth upon me and used bad language to me. For two or three hours I felt my sufferings very much

* That is, he was put in the stocks.

indeed, but afterwards my Lord by His holy presence turned my prison into a paradise. My heart was filled with boundless bliss. When I was singing, full of joy, many people came to the door to listen and I again began to preach. Then they released me. To such an extent had the leeches sucked my blood that on the following day I suffered with dizziness as I walked. Glory to God that He honoured me by letting me suffer for His name.

As a Sadhu he had often to sleep in caves or broken-down houses when people did not invite him to sleep in a house. Here is a striking experience:

It was raining and at night I arrived at Doiwala and no one offered me a place to lodge in, so I went into an utterly broken-down place full of filth and slept there, for I could find no better place than this. I had but one blanket and was wet through. Lying on one half and with the other half covering myself, I went to sleep. When I arose in the morning I saw a big snake lying by my side within the blanket. On seeing this I screamed aloud, but afterwards my heart was filled with thankfulness and I was comforted that, as God had protected me from this noxious thing throughout the night, He would still keep its mouth closed. Therefore I arose and slowly took up my blanket, and the snake remained coiled up in a corner. There is no doubt that our beloved Lord, according to His promise, is with us day by day to protect us from every kind of danger.

Nur Afshan (August 10, 1915) published a report from a correspondent giving a sample of the work which Sundar Singh did and the difficulties which he encountered:

I was coming down from a hill after having done some business in connection with the Forest Department, when I caught sight of a Sadhu who was going uphill panting, Hindi and Urdu books in one hand and a blanket on his shoulder. On account of the midday heat and the steep ascent, perspiration was flowing from him like water. . . . After a while having reached a village and having wiped off his sweat, he sat down on a log and began to sing:

"When we were being drowned in sin,
Christ came down from heaven to save us."

As I was a staunch follower of the Arya Samaj (although I have not been baptized, the wonderful life of the Swamiji has now taken me out of the Samaj and has led me to Christ, the spring of life), I got mad with rage on hearing this, and when he was preaching I restrained my anger with difficulty. In the meantime, one of the audience got up in a fury. With a blow, he threw the Swamiji down, who fell on his face. He got a severe pain in one hand and his face was covered with blood. But that brave man did not utter even a word. He got up, bandaged his hand with his turban, and began to sing with joy and pray for our welfare. For about half an hour the blood trickled down from his temple. Together with the stream of his blood, tears from his eyes were dropping on the ground like pearls. Is it possible that the blood and the tears of such a great man will remain fruitless? Never!

Sundar Singh reported that, in the course of his preaching tours in the Himalayas, he met an old Christian Maharishi in a cave near Kailash in 1912, 1916 and 1917 on three different occasions. This old saint spent all his time in Bible study and prayer. He claimed to be three

hundred years old. Sundar Singh sat at his feet and listened reverently to the spiritual instruction which the Maharishi gave him. The Maharishi also told him that there were several thousand Hindu Sanyasis who were believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. They were members of a secret Sanyasi Mission, met regularly for worship and preached Christ in various parts of India. Concerning this, there are three possibilities: (1) Sundar Singh made this story up. From what I know of Sundar Singh's character, I do not think that he was so dishonest. (2) Sundar Singh saw the Maharishi in a vision or dream. Sundar Singh always denied this emphatically. (3) Sundar Singh did meet near Kailash a Maharishi who claimed to be very old, and accepted uncritically this statement and spread it abroad. There is no reason to doubt that he did meet an old saint engaged in continuous prayer and intercession and in Bible study.

From the year 1917 his fame began to spread widely, and he was flooded with invitations. In 1917 he visited Western India. In the following year he travelled all over South India and Ceylon. The next year he visited Burma, Malaya, China and Japan. In 1920 he toured in England, America, and Australia. In 1922 he preached in many important places in Switzerland, Germany, Holland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark.

Letters came from various other parts of the world such as South America, Central Africa and New Zealand urging him to visit those countries also. Even in early youth he had had the desire to preach the Gospel in all parts of India. But he

never dreamed that he would be invited like this all over the world, he, a simple village lad from the Punjab, to bear witness for Christ to the nations.

From 1919 to 1922 I was working for my Doctor of Philosophy Degree at Oxford. That an Indian Christian leader had now begun to preach so effectively to Indians, baptizing some of the highest spiritual ideals of India in the name of Christ, made a tremendous appeal to me. After landing in England in February, 1920, Sundar Singh spent a week with his Quaker friends at Woodbrooke Settlement near Birmingham. From there he came to Cowley near Oxford, and stayed in the House of the Society of St. John the Evangelist with its high Anglo-Catholic worship and life. This was very characteristic of him. He moved freely among Christians of all Churches and they all warmly welcomed him. I spent as much time as possible with him at Oxford, and when I was free I also followed him to London, Paris, Geneva and Lausanne. I heard several of his addresses to immense congregations; I also heard him speak to small groups of people in which he answered their many questions with ready wit and real insight.

What was the secret of this immense attraction of Sundar Singh in the West? First, his picturesque appearance. He was a tall and well-built figure, clad in a flowing orange robe with a scarf of the same colour thrown across his shoulders. He wore also a turban of the same colour, neatly and deftly tied. He had on his bare feet simple sandals. His face, with its serenity and radiance, immediately

arrested attention and made people think of what Jesus may have looked like when He was on this earth. The story of Sundar's heroic missionary labours in Tibet made a real appeal. Men and women who had been interested in missions all their life were greatly pleased to see this Christian from India, and felt that their long devotion to the missionary cause had certainly been well worth while.

It is difficult to estimate the spiritual results of Sundar Singh's evangelistic tours in different parts of the world. Friends who moved closely with him reported that several conversions had taken place. Many correspondents wrote to him, some of them years after his visit to the West, informing him that they had been greatly helped by his addresses. Earnest Christians derived new spiritual strength from coming into contact with him. Friends of missions were led to work more earnestly for spreading the name of Jesus Christ all over the world.

As a result of his visits to the West, three books were written setting forth his Christian message. Canon B. H. Streeter and I wrote a book in English entitled *The Sadhu*, which had a large circulation and was translated into many languages. Canon B. H. Streeter was a distinguished Oxford theologian. When he came into contact with Sundar Singh, he was convinced that Sundar Singh was a spiritual genius who lived in the twentieth century a life of devotion and service like the saints of old. Dr. Nathan Söderblom, Archbishop of Uppsala, wrote a book in Swedish about Sundar Singh; and Professor F.

Heiler of Marburg in Germany wrote a book in German about his life and teaching, translated into English under the title, *The Gospel of Sundar Singh*. These three books introduced Sundar Singh into many learned theological circles, and his influence steadily became wider.

When Sundar Singh gave Canon Streeter and me the material we put into the book entitled *The Sadhu*, he told us that for some years he had experienced a state of ecstasy. This was a new fact in his life (not known to the public so far), and it gave his experience and teaching a new significance. His ecstasies occurred frequently, often as many as ten times in a month. In the visions which he saw during his ecstasy, Christ was always in the centre, radiant with beauty and always smiling a sweet and loving smile. Around the throne of Christ were multitudes of saints and angels. In his visions Sundar Singh talked with these spiritual beings and placed before them the problems which were troubling him. They were immediately solved for him. Sundar Singh said that many of the thoughts and illustrations which he used were given to him while in a state of ecstasy. Resurrection, Judgment, Heaven and Hell were the main themes of his visions. He was also convinced that in his ecstasy his thought was clearer and more intense than in his normal life. While in a state of ecstasy Sundar Singh was not aware of the outer world. He forgot about his food. He did not notice the passage of time. Once he even failed to go to a meeting at which he had been announced to speak, as he was entirely absorbed in his ecstasy.

When Sundar Singh returned to India after his evangelistic tours on the Continent of Europe in 1922, his health began steadily to become worse. From the year 1905 for seventeen years he had toiled hard at the work of preaching the Gospel. In the earlier years of his ministry he had often to go without food, as he refused to carry any money with him and ate only when he was invited to do so. There were many occasions when he had to sleep under a tree or in a cave. As his name became well known he was welcomed wherever he went, and there was no difficulty about a meal or about a shelter for the night. But, on the other hand, he was living under a terrific pressure of publicity, continually giving addresses in widely scattered cities and meeting people both in groups and as individuals. Even his robust constitution began to give way under the exacting demands he made upon it. After the year 1922 he was often ill. He had many heart attacks. Once he began a tour but had to come back after a haemorrhage. He had trouble in his eyes and had to undergo an operation. With his health so uncertain he could no longer accept invitations to other parts of the world. Even in India he had to be very careful and accepted invitations only in so far as the state of his health permitted. He did visit from time to time different cities in India, and also toured in the Himalayas. But he could not leave the shores of India any more.

There was an important consequence from this breakdown in his health. When he realized that he could no longer travel widely to proclaim

the name of his Lord and Saviour, he decided to write books. These books had a wide circulation. They were translated into forty languages. Once, when his Danish publisher reported that 162,000 copies of his books had sold in the Danish language alone, he rejoiced that his written messages were working day and night.

There was also another change in his mode of life. Before his father died, he wanted to leave Sundar Singh some money in order that he might buy a house for himself to live in, in his old age. Sundar Singh protested that he would not live to be an old man, that God would take care of him, and that he did not need a house to live in. In spite of this protest Sundar Singh's father left him some money. It is interesting to note that his father, who had strongly opposed Sundar Singh's conversion to the Christian religion, himself became a follower of Christ, though he does not seem to have been baptized. Large sums of money also began to come to Sundar Singh from the royalties on his books. So he bought at Subathu a bungalow formerly occupied by missionaries. He was a born evangelist, and the urge to share the good news of his salvation with others was strong in him. He said that sometimes he would work twelve hours a day at his manuscript.

The desire to visit Tibet was still strong in him. After his great tour in South India in 1919 he went to Tibet and passed through many hardships, as he had been wont to do in the earlier years of his ministry. In 1921 he went to Tibet after his tour in England, America and

Australia, again passing through many hardships and adventures. After 1922, however, though he started for Tibet on different occasions he was not able to proceed far. On April 16, 1929, he started once again for Tibet. His health had been poorly, and yet the urge within him to preach in Tibet was so strong that he had to yield to it. But no news was heard of him. All the efforts which his friends made to trace him were in vain. We can only conclude that he passed into the joy of his Lord as he had always wanted to do. Perhaps he slipped from some precipitous path and was killed; perhaps he was attacked by wild beasts; perhaps he died of cholera or some other epidemic; perhaps he was martyred for preaching the Gospel. The most curious thing is that not even the slightest news of his end is available.

The passages in the Anthology have been chosen from unpublished fragments or magazine articles. Sundar Singh repeated himself continually. He was wont to say, "There is no copyright on my mouth". I have confined myself to such sources in order to bring before the public some of the material which is not now available in his books.

CHAPTER ONE

THE LORD OF THE CROSS

The God of the Cross is the God of Love

In 1921 there broke out a jungle fire in the Himalayas. While most of the people around were busy in putting it out, I noticed several men standing and looking fixedly into a tree. "What are you looking at?" I asked. They, in reply, pointed to a nest full of young birds on the tree whose branches were already burning. Above it a bird was flying wildly about in great distress. They said, "We wish we could save that nest, but we cannot go near because of the blazing fire." A few minutes later the nest caught fire and I thought, "Now the mother-bird will fly away." Instead, to my great astonishment, I saw her fly down and spread her wings over the young ones. In a few minutes the poor bird was burnt to ashes along with her young. I had never seen anything like it before and said to those standing near, "Are we not astonished at this wonderful love? Think how much more wonderful must be the love of Him who has created such an unselfish love in His creatures. The same infinite and unselfish love brought Jesus Christ down from heaven into this world to become man that, by giving His own life, He might save us who were dying in our sins."

God does not send Sinners to Hell

Once in Northern India I was talking to a very spiritually-minded man; in the same house there was a young man who had come to spend a week with the son of my friend. As soon as he heard our conversation, we noticed that he grew troubled. That young man had come to stay for a week but after a few minutes he wanted to see a railway time-table. "What is the matter?" said my friend. "You came for a week and your room is ready." That young man found it awkward to explain that he could not stand even a few minutes of spiritual conversation, that if he stayed for a week it would be hell. After fifteen minutes he ran away. God is love. How can He see His children suffer in Hell? It is not God who sends sinners to Hell. It is our sins. God permits everybody to go to Heaven, but sinners would not like to be there. That young man would not be able to live in Heaven with the angels. He would not stay with us for fifteen minutes, and perhaps in Heaven he would not be able to stay even fifteen seconds.

I know Him

A Buddhist priest told me of a little girl of thirteen who said to him, "I am a Christian." "What do you know of Christ?" "I don't know much about Him, but I know one thing, I know Him." "Foolish girl, you are an uneducated girl." But she said, "I know Him more than I do my parents. I love them and they love me, but He is living within me; Jesus Christ gives life that the world cannot give and cannot take away."

So she was shut up in a room without food, and after twenty-four hours the priest asked, "How do you feel?" She was singing; joy was in her heart; she was not tired. She was shut up for two days, three days; and the third day when the door was opened, she was found still singing, filled with a wonderful peace and joy, that little uneducated girl. The Lama confessed, "You are my teacher; I am an old man, you are a child of thirteen, but I am your disciple. You have got what I have not got." Finding Jesus Christ does not depend on age or on learning; this little girl could not preach, but she had found something the priest had not found.

Lo, I am with you Always

Once I was preaching for three days in Tibet. The people were all against me, for the Buddhists do not like to hear about Christ. I was driven out of a village. It was the third day I had had no food. The night was very cold. The place was very high, 13,000 feet. The whole night I was shivering, hungry and thirsty, and there was nobody to help me. Satan tempted me: "You were in luxury at home; now Christ cannot help you." I began to pray and heard the words, "Watch and pray." I had wonderful peace, a peace the world cannot give and cannot take away. I went out of the cave and took a few leaves from a tree. Those leaves were very hard and not luscious, but I remember the presence of Christ made everything new. I enjoyed those leaves; I had never enjoyed such food at home. Then I could say to Satan, "Christ is here." He

has promised, "I am always with you." I have experienced that. He is the Living Christ. Many persons say, "Christ is only a great man, a prophet; He cannot help you." He is always with us. A great man cannot say, "I am always with you." Only Christ can say, "I am always with you, to the end of the world."

To know Christ, you must Pray

Once my father asked me a question. "I have been watching your life during these years, and have been comparing it with the years you spent at home. Then I never saw you happy. Now I have seen you suffering, but always happy. What is the reason?" I said, "It is not because there is something good in me, but the same Living Christ whom I used to hate, now I know Him and have found peace in Him." That made a deep impression on my father and he began to think about Christianity. He said: "How can I know Him?" I replied, "If you want to know about Him, you must read the Bible; but if you want to know Him, you must pray, because reading only is not enough. There are many infidels and heathen who read the Bible and never know Him. Prayer is the only key, the real key that will open the truth to you." He began to do that, and I was glad to hear him say, after some time, "I have found your Saviour, and now He is my Saviour."

We need Bread of Life, not mere Bread

I know a man of God in India who told me of his experience. A beggar used to go to him every

day for a piece of bread and went away as soon as he had received it. One day the man of prayer had nothing to give him, and asked him to sit and talk for a few minutes while his people fetched food. Within an hour the beggar was convinced and began to pray. He was entirely changed. He realized God's presence and was filled with joy. "For so many days I have come to you for a piece of bread and never thought you had anything more to give." The man of prayer said, "It is not my fault but yours. You only came for bread, and as soon as you got it you ran away; but now you had time to spend with me and I could talk to you." It is just so with our Saviour. There are many who go to the Heavenly Father and ask for this or that. Our Lord taught us to pray "Thy Will be done", but when we pray we say the contrary, "My will be done." We don't say it in words, with our lips, but we prove it by our actions. As soon as we receive things we run away from God. That is why very often God does not give us all we want.

Though poor, his Eyes shone like Stars

When I was in England in 1920, I was asked to visit a man who was on his death-bed. I had not much time and refused at first, but a man of God said to me, "You must go to see him; that will do you good." I went. He was a very poor man and had only one daughter who helped him. He had pain all over his body and had suffered for many years. His body was so weak; he was just like a skeleton, only bones. When I looked at his eyes, they were shining like

stars. He said, "You are going to give a message, but there is a message from me. Go and give it. People can't realize that there can be real happiness in the midst of suffering. I thank God that in the midst of suffering for many years I have had such wonderful joy, a joy that even a king in his palace has not had." He looked so weak, but I saw his face shining like an angel's, and Heaven was in his eyes. He said, "Perhaps after a few minutes the people will know I am dead. Please tell them that I am not going to die. I am going to live." I went and gave his message of joy. After I had finished the message I heard he was dead. Before his death he had such wonderful joy; he began to tell others, "I am going to see my Saviour, with the angels; I am going to live with my Saviour." People cannot understand, and many worldly people cannot have such joy as this poor man.

Peace, the Gift of Christ, not Imagination

After reading the Word of God I spend time in prayer, and then I feel a wonderful atmosphere that I call Heaven on earth. Psychologists have asked me about that experience. One said to me, "You feel a kind of peace; that is a matter of temperament, or the result of your imagination and meditation." I answered, "All right, before I give an answer I want to ask you a question. There was a man, born blind, who was made to sit in the sun on a cold winter's day. They asked him, 'What do you feel now?' 'I feel warm.' 'Yes, because the sun is shining.' 'Oh no, that warmth is the result of my own imagination;

there is nothing outside, no ball of fire hung in the sky. I cannot believe the sun is standing without a pillar under it. The heat is in my body, and in the circulation of my blood.' The blind man could not believe in the existence of the sun." "What do you think of that man?" I said to the psychologist. "He was a fool," he said. I replied, "And you are a learned fool. I have experienced meditation, and the imagination of hours could not give me that experience. Christ gave it to me when I never expected it, and you say, 'It is the result of your imagination.' When we are quiet with God, we receive heat and light from the Sun of Righteousness; it is not the result of our imagination or meditation, but a reality." I am sure that those who spend time in prayer every day will find it true.

Healed of his spiritual Leprosy

I once went with a clergyman to see a leper. My friend said to him, "What a pity! I am sorry to see you suffering." I was surprised to hear the leper's answer: "Sir, you are feeling sorry, but I thank God for this wonderful peace in my heart, and I thank God that I am a leper." I was surprised that he thanked God for his leprosy, but he added: "If I had been a healthy man, I might have been a murderer or a thief, but through this leprosy I realized the leprosy of sin. Now I am not anxious to be healed from this physical leprosy. My spiritual leprosy has been healed, and now I find joy in Jesus Christ." That poor man had a joy he could not express. I saw the tears in his eyes; he had no words,

only the language of tears. There was a proof that Christ came to preach the Gospel to the poor, to those who realize they are poor. It made me think that the clergyman was not as happy as the poor leper, and many other wealthy and healthy men are not as happy as that poor man. Experience proves that not in books but in the Living Christ is a message for the poor.

CHAPTER TWO

SALVATION THROUGH THE CROSS

Christ is my Life

Christ is my Saviour. He is my life. He is everything to me in heaven and earth. Once while travelling in a sandy region I was tired and thirsty. Standing on the top of a mound I looked for water. The sight of a lake at a distance brought joy to me, for now I hoped to quench my thirst. I walked toward it for a long time, but I could never reach it. Afterwards I found out that it was a mirage, only a mere appearance of water caused by the refracted rays of the sun. In reality there was none. In like manner I was moving about the world in search of the water of life. The things of this world—wealth, position, honour and luxury—looked like a lake, by drinking of whose waters I hoped to quench my spiritual thirst. But I could never find a drop of water to quench the thirst of my heart. I was dying of thirst. When my spiritual eyes were opened, I saw the rivers of living water flowing from His pierced side. I drank of it and was satisfied. Thirst was no more. Ever since, I have always drunk of that water of life, and have never been athirst in the sandy desert of this world. My heart is full of praise.

His presence gives me a peace which passeth

all understanding, no matter in what circumstances I am placed. Amidst persecution I have found peace, joy and happiness. . . . To follow Him and bear His Cross is so sweet and precious that, if I find no cross to bear in Heaven, I shall plead before Him to send me as His missionary, if need be to Hell, so that there at least I may have the opportunity to bear His Cross. His presence will change even Hell into Heaven. As the dumb man cannot express the sweetness of sweetmeats, even so a saved sinner cannot express the sweetness of His presence in his heart. . . . The sea is salty, and the fish lives all its life in it. But it never gets salty because it has life. Even so, if we receive life from Him, though in the world we are not of the world. Not only here but also in Heaven we shall find ourselves in Him.

Now I have no desire for wealth, position and honour. Nor do I desire even Heaven. But I need Him who has made my heart Heaven. His infinite love has expelled the love of all other things. Many Christians cannot realize this precious, life-giving presence, because for them Christ lives in their heads or in their Bibles, not in their hearts. Only when a man gives his heart shall he find Him. The heart is the throne for the King of Kings. The capital of Heaven is the heart where that King reigns.

He who bears the Cross, the Cross will bear him

I thank God that He called me, his unworthy servant, to Himself in the days of my youth, leading me to use the flower of my strength in His service. Even before I became a Christian

it was my prayer to God that He would reveal to me the way of truth, that walking in it myself I might also proclaim the way to others too; therefore He who is the Way, the Truth and the Life was revealed to me and I received this guidance, that I should preach the Gospel as a Sadhu, though I should in doing so be called upon to bear hunger, imprisonment, heat and difficulties of every kind. And so it has happened. Nevertheless, to His praise and glory be it said that after ten years of experience I can say that he who willingly bears the Cross, the Cross will lift him and will bear him to his desired end. Therefore let us not shirk this blessed Cross, but denying self let us take up our Cross daily and follow our Lord.

A Wonderful Occurrence

When, after leaving Kailash, I reached the inhabited part and enquired from the people there the way to the nearest village, they, out of enmity, seeing I was a Christian, directed me to a dangerous forest path; as I was quite ignorant, I followed their direction and went that way. As I travelled night came on, but no village appeared and the sun was setting when I arrived at the bank of a river. From every side the noise of wild animals came to my ears. I tried to cross the river but could not do so, and at length sat down in despair, feeling that things boded ill for me that day and that the end of my life was at hand. My eyes filled with tears.

Just then, when I raised my eyes and glanced across the river, I saw a man sitting warming

himself by a fire. He said, "Do not be troubled. I am coming to help you." I was very glad to see him as he rose and came to me, and I was amazed to see how unhesitatingly and fearlessly he entered the swiftly flowing river and came out. He said to me, "Sit on my shoulder and do not fear." So lifting me, he very gently carried me across. The surprising thing to me was that, while I could not get even myself across, yet he, bearing such a burden, came through without anxiety. I concluded: "As he is a resident of this place he is practised in crossing, and now sitting with him I will preach the Gospel to him and will also render my thanks to him." But when I turned and looked back, immediately both the fire and the man disappeared and there were no bounds to my awe, wondering what this was. . . . Certainly our Lord is yesterday, to-day, and for ever the same. There is no change in Him, but the change is in our faith.

Salvation is Forgiveness and Freedom from Sin

Salvation is not only forgiveness of sin but freedom from sin. It is quite possible that even after sins are forgiven we may die in our sins. There are many sinners whose sins have been forgiven and who are still dying in their sins. Christ saves us from sin; He not only forgives our sin. There was a man in the Himalayas who was ill so long that he lost his mind. One day one of his relations went to see him and sat beside him. Suddenly the madman took a sharp knife and cut the other's throat. He was arrested and

condemned to be hanged. His relations made an appeal, and asked that he might be forgiven because his long illness had caused him to lose his sense. The Rajah was a kind man and thought the request reasonable. He ordered the man to be set free. The madman killed his relation on the 20th and was condemned to be hanged on the 22nd. On the 21st he was forgiven, and on the 22nd he died. His sin was forgiven, but of what use was that? He died. Salvation for that man was in healing his sickness. He committed murder, but that was only the result of his disease; he was not healed from that disease, he died from that disease. Just so there are many people whose sins may be forgiven, and still they die in their sins. Christ has come to save us from our sins. If we have been healed from sin then we have been saved, but if we still go on committing sin we shall die in our sin. Many people are mistaken. They think that when their sin is forgiven they are saved, but they are not saved if their sinful nature has not been cured.

The Mystery of Pain and Suffering

The mystery of pain and suffering in the world is a great problem. Though it is owing to sin, it is not always so, because often God calls us into His peace-giving presence through it. The Cross is very essential for our spiritual life and progress. If pain and suffering were not for the good of His creation, the Almighty God would have wiped them off the face of the earth at once. But He did not and does not do so, because it is good for us and a means of blessing. Consider

the grain of wheat sown in the ground, that before it grows up in the open air to be beautified by the light and warmth of the sun, it had to lie in the dark womb of the earth; and afterwards in its appointed time it comes out and becomes fruitful. Just so it is with us.

Repentance is the greatest Need

Repentance is the greatest need for those who want to enter the Kingdom of God (Matt. 3 : 2). The Kingdom of God is not only a future kingdom but it begins here on earth. One sin, the smallest sin, even an evil thought, is sufficient to destroy our hope and to keep us outside the Kingdom. The so-called small sins are the most dangerous, like the germs that cause disease. We cannot see the germs with the naked eye but thousands of people succumb to their ravages, and so it is with the sins we do not see.

The proof that we have been freed from the power of sin and have entered the Kingdom of God is the experience of peace. A certain professor asked me, "How can you be sure of your salvation?" I replied, "Just as I know that something I have tasted is sweet. I know that I have been saved because I have the experience of peace."

A man did not want to believe that ice can burn. In spite of being warned against it, he walked on the ice with bare feet till his skin was destroyed. Some people cannot comprehend that sin burns until it has caused the suffering.

Sin destroys our relationship with God. A

certain man begged to be relieved of his pain, before his broken bones were set. How foolish! First our relationship to God must be re-established before the pain caused by sin can be relieved.

CHAPTER THREE

THE CROSS IS HEAVEN

Real Joy

I sometimes tell my friends that, in order to explain to others, I use the words prison, suffering, persecution, but the suffering was no suffering at all. If I had really suffered I would never have gone to preach the Gospel in the villages. The fact is that, whenever I had to suffer for our dear Saviour, I always found Heaven on earth. It gave me such a wonderful joy that I could not find anywhere else. Then I always realized His presence in such a clear way that no doubt was left. Suffering was suffering before I became a Christian, for at that time I had no peace. . . . That was suffering in the real sense of the word; I felt as if I were in Hell. But after my conversion I had no suffering at all. When I was in prison, it was no prison for me but Heaven on earth. I had more joy in the midst of persecution than I had when I was not persecuted, more joy when I had no food than when I had the most luxurious food. It was His presence that gave me this joy, this Heaven on earth; no one can take away this joy.

The Lap of God

On the way to Ilom in Nepal I passed many

villages where people whole-heartedly heard the Word of God. In this territory the roads are awful. One is tired by ascents and descents and the crossing of streams. June 7, 1914, will always be in my memory—the fatigue of the journey, the extreme hunger and thirst, the heavy showers of rain and the ascent of seven miles. A terrible blast of wind threw me into a cave. O praised be the Lord; though I fell from such a height, I did not get any hurt at all. Yes! The cave became the lap of God for me, where no hurt was possible, and that ascent turned into a reach of Paradise. The blast of wind turned into a wave of love, and the shower of rain into a shower of grace; the hunger and thirst turned into satisfaction, the fatigue into refreshment, and the Cross into peace. The different stages of the Crucifixion of Jesus came before me in a vision, that first of all He was awake in the Garden of Gethsemane the whole night; secondly, He was hungry and thirsty; thirdly, due to lashes and the crown of thorns He was bleeding; fourthly, besides all these troubles He had to lift up the Cross Himself. For these reasons He fell when He was climbing Golgotha. My cross is nothing before Thine and, O dear Lord, by the unique love and grace of Thy Cross, I have received and will receive blessings.

I wish I could show this peace of my soul which cannot be described to those brothers of mine who are quite empty and unaware of it; but how is it possible? This is the "hidden manna" which cannot be understood except by one who has received it (Rev. 2 : 17). I

can say this much from my personal experience, that the Cross lifts those who lift it. It carries them to the streams of peace in this world (which is full of pain), and it takes to heaven those who follow Christ by lifting the Cross.

Conversation between Sundar Singh and Government Officer

I: God through Christ has called all nations for life eternal, and He ordered me to give you this Gospel. If you will not have faith in Him, a day will come when you will have to stand before Him, just as at this time I am standing before you, and the decree of eternal punishment will be laid upon you.

Officer: When that time comes it will be seen; but you must be put into jail just now, and I will see how your Christ will come for your rescue.

I: I am not afraid of this imprisonment; if this had been my fear, I would never have come to preach. I knew that I would be treated like this. My Christ has not set me free from this custody, but He has set me free from sin and Satan, and now I am always free. Though you fasten my feet with a wooden hook, I shall still be free. When that happens I will consider my feet not on wood but on rock which cannot be moved.

Officer: Be quiet and do not talk any more.

I: So long as I have got life in me and a tongue in my mouth, I will not stop talking about my Christ. Leaving custody aside, I am ready to give my life.

Officer (to Inspector): There is no need for any more discussion; take him off and put him into custody.

Inspector: Sir, by taking this infidel into custody we will pollute it.

I was wondering very much that here even the prison house is thought holy. If that place is thought sacred, then why cannot the pious people who are in it be set free? Anyhow, after this the Inspector said that a man is thrown into prison that he may suffer there, but this Christian takes it to be a thing of pleasure and comfort, so it would be better if some other punishment were planned for him.

Officer: It would be better if he be turned out from the territory, because if he be put into custody, it is just possible that by his teaching for six months other prisoners may become Christians, and separate arrangement is difficult.

So all agreed on this point, and they at once sent a sentinel to take me across the boundary.

Thorn-bearers or Fruit-bearers

We must be grafted into Him and then we can bear fruit. There have been many whose lives have been full of thorns, but by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ they have become fruitful. I saw a tree on the mountains once, full of thorns. The man in charge said, "I can change this into a fruitful tree." How could it be done? A few years afterwards I went to see it. The gardener had grafted it, and instead of the thorns there was excellent fruit. So the gracious

Lord takes us in hand and makes us produce fruit. The Lord came for all, and He can turn sinners into saints, just as in the case of that tree I mentioned.

There was in Baluchistan a highwayman or dacoit. He had killed a great many people, and if you had seen him you would have said that any change in such a man was impossible. He heard of the Lord Jesus Christ, and a wonderful change took place, and when people saw what a difference there was they said, "How is this?" The dacoit said, "It was not I that made the change, it was Jesus Christ. He came into my life and made the change. I am surprised to find that He has made a heaven for me even now, by the change He has brought about. I, who used to be such a murderer, am now become a preacher."

There was a certain huntsman who went out into the forest to hunt. He saw a tree with a honey-comb, and so, laying his gun on the ground, he climbed up the tree to get at the honey-comb and began to eat it. He had no idea of the danger he was in. There was a tiger at the foot of the tree. "Well, I am in a dangerous place now," he thought to himself, "but because I am on the tree I may escape"; and so he went on eating the honey without thinking of the tiger. The tree was on the bank of a river, and he thought he could jump into the river if the tiger attacked him. However, when he looked at the river he saw a crocodile, with its mouth open. He said to himself, "Well, I am in a fix, my hour of death is come. I must stop where I

am, and perhaps the tiger will go away and the crocodile too." But there was another danger which he found soon afterwards—there was a worm eating the root of the tree. After a short time the tree itself crashed down, and he fell into the mouth of the crocodile.

This is like our case. We are living out in the forest. On one side is the devil seeking whom he may devour. Our spirit lives on the tree, in this body of ours, and we indulge in the honey of sin, forgetting the danger we are in. When we are in the Lord we are safe from Satan and nothing can take us away from His hand.

What is the fruit He wants to see? It is what we can give—our deeds, the fruit of our life. In Hinduism it is said that by doing good works you can become good. The Christian religion says, "Be good first and then you can do good works." Through the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit you can become good, and then you can do good.

Conversion of a Robber

When I was passing through the hill-forest named Bheelera, I saw four men sitting by the side of the road. One of them sprang at me with a big knife in his hand. Seeing no possible way of escape, I bent my neck. Then he refrained from striking, but snatching my blanket from my shoulder he cleared off. When I had gone about a furlong, he called me back. I thought to myself there was now no hope for me, but it turned out exactly opposite to my imaginings. When he said, "Who are you?" I told him

about myself and my purpose in touring these parts, and read to him the story of the rich man and Lazarus. This thought struck him to the heart, that, if the rich man who had never robbed was in hell, then what would be his own fate, who had robbed hundreds of times? He then repented on the spot and asked for my forgiveness. He returned my blanket to me. . . . He made for me some tea flavoured with salt and gave me some dried fruit to eat. It was as though the Lord had taken out for me "meat from the eater and sweetness from the strong" (Judges 14 : 14), and "prepared a table before me in the presence of my enemies" (Psalm 23 : 5). I prayed with him, but he was very distressed. Then he took off his coat, spread it under me, and going on one side he began to weep over his condition. When I woke up in the morning, he told me all about his evil life and, showing me a lot of bones in a cave, said: "This is my sin." Then I pitied him very much, but for myself I thanked God that He had been with me, otherwise to-day my bones too would have been found on that heap. Afterwards I told him the story of the thief to whom the Lord had said, "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise", and again I prayed; and he was comforted in his heart with the thought, "The Lord will save even me." He desired that I would baptize him, but on my advice he set out for the plains that he might receive baptism at the hands of some clergyman.

Joy and Peace now

I met a Hindu Sadhu who had practised Yoga for a long time in order to save his soul. I asked him how long he had been doing these exercises, and he said thirteen years. He was a real seeker after truth, but had no joy in his heart. I said to him, "What is the use of doing all these things? You have no joy." He answered, "When we are trying to be saved, we cannot find joy in this life. But I am expecting joy and peace in the next." When I was a Hindu I used to think the same, that we cannot find peace in this world; only sin, sorrow, and suffering. But I have now seen wonderful proofs that He gives joy and peace in this world.

Peace or Love?

Sometimes people say to me, "You are always speaking about peace and not about love." Peace is the aim of our soul. We take much trouble to make money and have bodily comforts in order to have peace, but the real peace we can only find in Him, in God who is love. When you have received that peace, you cannot separate it from His love; you will feel that love, and also feel love for others. That peace will compel you to tell others of His love. But if we ourselves are not satisfied, how can we be anxious for others who are not satisfied? The first thing is that we must find peace, that peace which passeth all understanding, and then we can give our testimony and bear witness for the wonderful love of God.

The wonderful Peace in Christ

In Sweden I met a man. That man had travelled much and I asked him what he had sought in his travels. I received this answer: "I was in search of a country where one can live in comfort and joy, a country without illness and sorrow, without heat and cold, but I have not found it." Then I told him about the peace I had found, not in a country but in Christ. I said, "I travel to witness about this peace."

The Lord supplies an hundredfold

After my conversion I was tempted. At first the question came to me whether I could live as a Christian without being baptized. In the face of persecution by my relatives I considered receiving baptism secretly in a distant place. But I came to realize that I could not receive peace without confessing and following Him openly, even if it meant that I had to leave my parents and everything. And the Lord not only supplied all I needed but an hundredfold more.

Though the Tongue is lacking, Life reveals the Reality

One day during my meditation and prayer I felt Christ's presence strongly. My heart overflowed with heavenly joy. I saw that, in this world of sorrow and suffering, there is a hidden and inexhaustible mine of great joy, of which the world knows nothing because even men who experience it are not able to

speak of it adequately and convincingly. I was anxious to go down to the neighbouring village to share that joy with others. But because of my physical illness, there arose a conflict between my soul and my body. The soul wanted to go; the body lagged behind. But finally I overcame and dragged my sick body forward, and told the people in the village what Christ's presence had done for me and would do for them. They knew that I was ill and that there was some inner compulsion which urged me to speak to them. Thus though I was unable to explain all that Christ's presence meant to me, that deep experience had been translated into action and men had been helped. Where the tongue is lacking, life reveals the reality.

CHAPTER FOUR

BEARERS OF THE CROSS

The Martyr Kartar Singh

This young man was the son of Sundar Harnam Singh of Patiala. When his father heard that he was about to become a Christian, he made every possible effort to prevent it. The son's reply was: "Everywhere have I sought a Deliverer, but found him nowhere; and now at last through His Word God has revealed to me that the Saviour is the Lord Christ, and now I shall not leave Him who, in my stead, gave His life to save me." Then his father called his betrothed wife, whom he dearly loved. This girl, named Bhagwan Kunwar, was beautiful and well-behaved. She came and said, "Oh fortune-favoured one, have you no concern for your comfort or youth or position? Consider well, otherwise you will regret afterwards."

Kartar Singh: "Do not become a stumbling block to me; comfort, youth and position are transitory, but Christ has given me an everlasting kingdom and the right to become a child of God. Dost not thou desire to have this privilege along with me?"

Bhagwan Kunwar: "I have already given my heart to thee; wilt thou not give thy heart to me?"

Kartar Singh: "Oh Bhagwan Kunwar, in my breast there is but one heart, and that I have already given to one (that is, Christ). Nowhere can I get another heart to give thee. Better is it that thou shouldst withdraw thy heart from me and give it to Him."

Bhagwan Kunwar, hearing this, went away weeping and told everything to his father. The father in a burst of anger called Kartar Singh and ordered him to put off all his clothes and to leave the house, and to renounce all connection with him from that time, that is to say, in the month of December and at night-time. There was no help for it. He could only obey. So he took off his clothes and laid them at his father's feet and said to his father, "I am not ashamed to-day to divest myself of these clothes, because the righteousness of Jesus Christ has covered all my nakedness and sin." And then, according to his father's order, he left the house, praying as he did so.

For two or three days he lived in the forest, though he was tormented with hunger and cold, but his heart was full of peace. Just imagine what this experience must have been to one reared in a palace in luxury. To him poverty and trouble had been entirely unknown. Now he was without any means of livelihood. On the third day he went to a certain person and, doing laborious work for him, was able to purchase for himself a turban and a coat; and then adopting the style of a Sadhu, he went to Tibet to preach the Gospel of the crucified Christ.

On the way he was baptized by the Rev.

Rabarsanki, and studying day and night he learnt the Tibetan language. Afterwards, preaching as he went, he reached the Tibetan town of Tashigang and preached there for the space of three months. All the people became his enemies. On one occasion, when the people realized that he would not of himself go away, they bundled him up in a cloth, and in turn bearing him upon their shoulders took him outside their district and left him there; but in a few days' time he arrived back again. Then the Lama pronounced the sentence of death against him. On hearing this Kartar Singh said, "You may do what you wish to me, but I shall not leave this place, because the love of my Lord for me and my brotherly love to Him constrain me to offer to shed my blood even for your sakes, in order that you may believe in the truth and escape destruction. Oh Lama, repent and believe on the Lord, or else some day in this same manner the sentence of everlasting death will be passed upon you."

After this they conveyed him to a hill which was the place of execution. As they were ascending the hill he said to them, "I shall not now descend from this place, but after three days I shall rise up to heaven to my dear Lord." Arriving on the hill they sewed him up in the skin of a yak (Tibetan ox) and laid him, thus sewn up, in the sun. As the sun shone on it, the hide gradually shrank and tightened, and for three days this faithful servant was subjected to this misery, singing songs of praise and praying for the welfare of his enemies. Seeing him so

joyful under such distressing circumstances, they were astonished. Some of them said, "He must be possessed with the spirit of one of the gods." On the fourth day, when the time of his liberation from suffering and entry into eternal rest had come, he asked for permission to put out one hand, that he might write some final words. Accordingly they released one hand and put a pencil in it. Then on one of the pages of his Gospel, which is still in the possession of the Lama's clerk, he wrote these lines of poetry:

"He gave me life, that given life was His own still.
The truth is this, that I have not in any sense repaid Him.
The full acknowledgment would be if I sacrificed myself a thousand times to the glory of that dear name.
I will ask from God not one but a hundred thousand lives that a hundred thousand times I may die for my Friend's sake.
I pray that my love for Him may not be less than that of the Hindu woman who burns along with the corpse of her dead husband.
When for the dead husband, whom she may not hope to meet again, she does so much, how much more should I not do for a living Lord who is moreover the Lord of life?
It is a shame to me to do less than a Hindu woman would."

Then addressing the people, he said, "Are you standing to see the death of a Christian? Come and gaze attentively, that not a Christian but death itself dies here. Oh Lord! into Thy hands I commit my spirit, because it is Thine." Saying this, he entered into eternal rest with the Lord and left us an example.

On one occasion, when on Patiala station I was speaking about this witness, I saw a venerable man who wept bitterly; and afterwards on enquiry I learned that he was the father of that Kartar Singh. Weeping he said, "Alas! I knew not that he was such a devout and Christian son, or I should not have treated bim so badly." Therefore the result of his becoming a Christian and of his martyrdom was this, that his father is a secret Christian, and of those among whom he was martyred several have become Christians.

Gul Badshah the Martyr

The Rev. Mr. Khair Ullah told me about this man, who was recently martyred in Afghanistan. When, after becoming a Christian, he returned to his relatives, they first of all lovingly, but afterwards harshly, told him to deny Christ and repeating the Kalima revert to Islam; but that man of God repeatedly declared: "I am a Christian and far better would it be for me to die rather than deny Christ and live." Then they began to cut him with knives, but he joyfully went on praying for their welfare and remained steadfast even unto death, though they cut him to pieces. Oh readers, reflect!

In the service of Christ and in witness for Him many have given up not only body, mind and wealth, but even life itself. What have you done for Him or what are you prepared to do? Now is the opportunity for you to be associated with these in the Kingdom of God. Otherwise:

"The day soon will come when your life
will be spent
Nor can you expect to return here again."

A Friend's Love for Thieves

Once while a friend of mine was praying, three thieves broke into his house and stole a few things, and then went away. He prayed for them, then ran after them and called them back, and said, "You have forgotten some things. Take along all that you need." He gave them all that they had found, opening trunks and boxes. Then he prepared a meal for them and said, "You must be hungry, therefore eat before you go." At last he gave them a Bible and said, "Take this, for you need it more than all else." One of the three thieves was later converted, and the other two also began to live a new life. Prayer can accomplish what no prison can do.

Turn the other Cheek

As I was walking in the main bazaar along with a preacher I went up to a Moulvi. He bitterly opposed the preaching, but had been standing and listening too. So angry did he

become that he gave me a cuff, on which I turned the other cheek to him. He was ashamed and remained silent. At midnight he sent a man to the preacher saying, "Kindly arrange for me to meet the Sadhu so that I may ask his forgiveness for my fault, for I cannot sleep." At that time, however, I was at some distance away. It was not until morning that the preacher could make enquiries and get at me. He said, "The Moulvi calls you to dine with him." Glory be to God that He changed his heart entirely. It is to be hoped he may become a living witness.

CHAPTER FIVE

A PHILOSOPHER AND A SAINT

Many years ago there was a saint, who, after finishing his daily round of duties, used to go to a cave in a jungle for daily prayer and meditation, and practised the ministry of intercession for hours. One day, by chance, a philosopher happened to come that way, and having seen the saint on his knees stood there in amazement for a while. Then he advanced to the entrance of the cave and tapped, but the saint was so absorbed in contemplation that he did not respond. The philosopher waited at least half an hour and was on the point of leaving, when the saint rose and called him in. Both remained silent for a few moments, and then the philosopher broke the silence and said to the saint, "Do you know that this cave is notorious as the 'Den of Robbers'?"

Saint: Yes, Sir, I already know it very well. This cave is a rendezvous for robbers but a shelter for me, because when, having done my usual work, I desire to pray and meditate, in my busy city life in the midst of so many people, I find obstacles and impediments that disturb my worship and often distract my mind so much that neither I nor others get any real benefit from my spiritual exercise. So I retire from the

distractions and disturbances of the noisy city life to this quiet place, rest here in the sweet presence of my God, and worship Him in the beauty of His Holiness. Here I spend my time in prayer and I offer intercessions on behalf of others. . . .

Thieves and robbers often come to this place but they never trouble me. One of them once said to me, "See, venerable saint, we are not blind and stupid. We rob those people, who are deceivers, because though they are not robbers and thieves themselves yet they are not in any way behind us in robbing others in a variety of ways." I will not divulge their names nor report them to Government, because I know this worldly and temporal government can only give them some corporal punishment which cannot reform them but makes their hearts still harder. But I intercede for them in the presence of my God who can change their hearts and give them a new life. Accordingly some of them have really become new creatures and good citizens, and have themselves helped others spiritually. So, by the grace of God, my spiritual work is being carried on in this solitude in the same way as it is done among the multitudes.

To hear the voice of this silent God it is quite essential that we should wait on Him in silence. God works in silence. Similarly man also, who is created in the image and after the likeness of God, thinks, feels, remembers and wills in silence and works in many ways. For instance, different kinds of inventions and discoveries have been made in silence. In short, all great things

originated and still originate in silence. Man reveals his thoughts and plans to others by means of words, when he needs the help of those around him or when he desires to help other people. As God does not need the help or assistance of any man in creating a thing, in silence He makes everything and supports the whole creation quite independently. However, when He desires to bring back those who have gone astray, He speaks to them through His prophets and apostles and, in this last age in the fulness of time, He became manifest in flesh, spoke to mankind and completed the work of salvation for them.

As some people wrongly think, to watch and pray quietly does not mean laziness or carelessness. But, as a matter of fact, it is a dip in the ocean of reality for the sake of the precious pearls of divine truths which enrich not only him that dives but others also. As a diver holds his breath while he is diving, so a man of prayer and contemplation shuts himself in the chamber of silence from all the distractions of this noisy world. But for the purpose of diving in the busy life of the ocean of this world, prayer is needed by means of which one may be able always to breathe the breath of prayer in the Holy Spirit from above, without which it is impossible to maintain the spiritual life.

Philosopher: I can also testify to this fact from my personal experience—that as long as I do not silently concentrate my thoughts and attention on a subject I cannot think logically about it, and without proper reasoning I cannot

arrive at a valid conclusion. But in spite of all this reasoning I am at a loss to know fully as to the existence of your silent God whom you call also the Ocean of Reality. Can you produce any convincing argument to prove the existence of God?

Saint: Within and without my own self I feel and find the proof of the existence of God as clearly as the proof of my own being, nay, even more than this. But before we try to know Him, it is necessary that we should first know ourselves. Then we shall be able to know and understand Him who has created man in His own image and after His own likeness. But we should remember that He is above all human knowledge and comprehension, because if the human reason can comprehend Him then He is no more a god but merely a human being. Myriads of people are ready to-day to testify from their personal experience that He always dwells in that heart which has a childlike faith and is full of divine love. As the experience of the warmth of fire, which we get by putting our hand into the flame, goes to prove the existence of fire, so likewise the spiritual experience we have of His sweet and life-giving communion and fellowship is a strong and solid proof of the existence of God.

We can also feel and know Him without worldly and external knowledge. For instance, I know a man who is dumb, deaf and blind. When, at the age of fifteen, on being questioned by means of touch as to whether he knew God, he answered by signs to this effect, "I

hardly know anything with regard to the external condition of this world, but I know well my own Creator and Master according to the capacity of my understanding and need. I always see Him with my inner eyes and am delighted in His sweet presence" (Rom. 1 : 19). That well-known personality, Helen Keller of Boston, also had a similar experience. When she was twelve years of age and Dr. Brookes taught her, for the first time in her life, about God and His love, she said, "Yes, I knew all this before, but did not know His name."

Philosopher: Well, I do not wish to hold a controversy with you on this topic, but can you please tell me what is it to renounce the world? Do you mean to say that you hate the world or regard yourself as superior to others? Why have you renounced the world?

Saint: I myself do not like discussions. This is only mutual talk. Now as to the question you have asked me. I assure you that I do not hate the world nor should I ever dare to regard myself as superior to others—God forbid if I ever think so. Like other people I am also a weak and sinful man, but the redeeming Grace of God saves and helps me. It is incorrect to think that I have renounced the world. I have never done so, nor have any desire to do so. Whatever evil there is in this world, that I hate and am trying to renounce; I am trying to renounce also those impediments and stumbling-blocks that stand in the way of my spiritual life. Otherwise, as long as we are in this world, it is impossible to renounce it,

because even if we leave a city or colony and go to live in a jungle that jungle is also a part of the world. As long as we are in this earthly tabernacle it is ridiculous to think of renouncing it, because our bodies are naturally connected with the world no matter where we go or live. No man can renounce it till bodily death cuts this natural tie. In fact, our God does not even like the idea that we should have no connection whatever with the world in which He Himself has placed us to live and move and have our being, or He would have never set us here. But His Holy Will is this, that we may use the things of this world in the right way and prepare ourselves during our sojourn here, for it is a period of probation, for our Heavenly Home according to His holy purpose.

Philosopher: Well, if you do not consider yourself, as you say, superior to other people, but, on the contrary, acknowledge that you are weak and sinful like all other sinners, then I do not see any difference between you and the other folk of this world. Why do people call you a saint?

Saint: You will perhaps remember that Socrates . . . once unreservedly confessed that he had learned, in all his life, one lesson and only one—that he knew nothing. Thereupon other people asked him, if he being a philosopher knew nothing, what would be the difference between him and other folk? He replied that he differed from others in only one respect; he was aware that he knew nothing, while they did not even know that they knew nothing.

My case is quite similar to his. I know that I am weak and sinful, but other people do not even know that they are sinners. Thus being quite ignorant of the remedy of sin they die in their own sins.

If people call me a saint it is their fault and they are mistaken. I am, in fact, trying to become a saint by living in intimate fellowship with my holy God, but I can never say that I have become a saint. Of course I am always ready to give this testimony publicly and emphatically that, in the fellowship of my dear and holy Saviour, I enjoy that peace which passes all understanding; and, as this heavenly joy cannot be expressed in any language of the world, so worldly people do not know it at all.

Philosopher: I venture to ask you another question, that, if this joy and spiritual experience cannot be expressed in any human language, then what is the difference between man and the animals? An animal, of course, cannot express or describe its impulses; but if man, with the power of speech which God has given him, acts in a similar way, then I do not think there is any difference or distinction between an animal and a man. Therefore, in my opinion, all these spiritual experiences are merely imaginary.

Saint: Please don't mix up things, but remember that the experiences of spiritual life are not imaginary at all. They are real. Do not the practical lives of all spiritual people prove this fact? Spiritual things are discerned and described in spiritual ways (1 Cor. 2 : 13–15). Now

with regard to the difference between man and animal, it is evident in several ways. Except deep spiritual thoughts and experiences which can only be told in terms of spiritual language, man can according to his capacity express all other impulses and emotions in human terminology and phraseology. But an animal, on the other hand, cannot do so at all in spite of the fact that it has a tongue. Just consider, it is dumb though it has a tongue. It is due to the fact that an animal has neither the power of speech nor has it anything to say.

In addition to this, there is another great difference which differentiates man from animal. Animals have instinct while man is endowed with reason. As for instance a weaver-bird builds its nest exactly in the same way as it built centuries ago. We do not see any improvement or progress in its design and structure. It is stereotyped in its shape and make. Now man, on the contrary, is naturally progressive; but unless he learns and endeavours he can neither acquire knowledge nor advance, while the animal does its work without any instruction or endeavour. Just consider how bees make their hives and gather honey from flowers. All these activities are merely instinctive, i.e. unalterably fixed and unelastic in their processes, and are not therefore capable of any improvement or progress. But man acquires everything after the endeavour and struggle of years. It is the express purpose of God that man, through this long and hard strain and struggle, may grow into Eternal Life so that he may enjoy the sweet communion and

intimate fellowship of his Creator, constantly and consistently grow like Him who has made man in His image and after His own likeness, and dwell joyfully for ever in His blessed kingdom and thus participate in the joy of the heavenly life which will have no end.

After this mutual talk the philosopher and the saint embraced each other very affectionately. The philosopher wished his friend good-bye and went away saying, "I shall come again to see you." The saint spent some time on his knees, and then left the cave at the appointed time to be busy with his daily work.

CHAPTER SIX

A SEEKER AND THE LIVING CHRIST

Once upon a time there was a rich man who had all the means of worldly ease and comfort and enjoyed a life of plenty and luxury. But, unhappily, he had no son. . . . He used to say to his friends and wife, "Oh, pray for me without ceasing that God may mercifully grant me a son who will inherit my property and keep up the name and fame of my family." After some time, God answered such intercessions and gave him a beautiful and promising boy.

His parents entertained many plans and proposals concerning their newly-born son, and the expectations and hopes knew no bounds. When he was six years old, his father made special arrangements for his education, which continued till the age of fifteen. Further, he was coached in domestic science, and at the age of eighteen he got married. Now the young couple began to lead such a life of peace and plenty as impressed people in the neighbourhood very much, and they were looked upon as an exemplary pair.

So far they enjoyed all the pleasures of the world and had no experience whatsoever of the woes and worries of human life. But some

months after their marriage the husband met with a great catastrophe. His dear parents, whom he loved so much, died of cholera, and consequently all his affairs were upset. Misfortune never comes alone. On the one hand, he was in great grief and misery on account of his sad bereavement, and on the other hand, thieves broke into his house and carried away all his money and costly things. Prosperity makes friends and adversity tests them. At this juncture, all his self-interested friends and selfish wellwishers deserted him one by one.

He could not help exclaiming in despair "Oh what shall I do and where shall I go? Soon a child is to be born in the family. On his birth, alas! I shall not feel so much joy and happiness as my dear parents felt on my birth, nor shall I be able to do as much for the child to come as was done for me by my parents. Oh, what is all this and how unfortunate are we!" When his good wife heard his pathetic and distressing words, she comforted him and wiped his tears with her tender and affectionate hands, thus encouraging him: "My dear husband, don't weep and worry. Only trust in God. Whatever He has now done He has done well for us; and in whatsoever way He will deal with us in future it will be no doubt for our betterment. So don't lose heart but play the man."

After some days, in these adverse circumstances, the child was born. The man nursed and attended to his wife and child to the best of his abilities, but, unhappily, the child died the next day. He went to bury the little body

and, on his return home, he found his wife quite unconscious. He put some cold water into her mouth, and having placed her head in his own lap, he sat on her bed. After a short time, his wife came to her senses and opened her eyes. The husband was exhausted owing to grief and bereavement and the wife was extremely weak and poorly, so they simply looked at each other with love and longing eyes, but could exchange no words. After a little while her eyes closed for ever.

For the poor husband, this shock was unbearable; he fainted and fell down on the ground, and God knows how long he remained there in that condition. One of his neighbours happened to pass that way and, having seen his friend lying helpless and unconscious on the bare, hard ground, he went and related the story to his friends and acquaintances in the neighbourhood, who at once arrived at the scene and arranged for the funeral of his dear and departed wife. When they carried the coffin to a graveyard nearby he also followed them, and, standing by the graveside weeping bitterly, he ejaculated, "I wish either I myself or all my sorrows and sufferings could have been buried in this grave instead of my dear wife! My real friend, my genuine wellwisher, my beloved has departed leaving me out in the cold. Alas! how unfortunate and miserable a man I am! Now I am left alone in this world." After having uttered these words he fainted again and fell on the ground. This pathetic and heart-rending spectacle moved to tears the people who had

gathered round the grave. They gently lifted him up and conveyed him to his dwelling. After he had taken some rest, they began to sympathize with him and console him saying, "Now what is done is done. It is useless for you to grieve any more. Sooner or later, we all have to leave this world for ever, every one in his or her own turn."

Now, in fact, the instability of the world brought about a marvellous change in him. After some time, he went to a religious leader and took a keen interest in learning religious truths from him. But all this did not bring any satisfaction or peace into his disturbed mind. So he went into a jungle and began to live alone in a cave, and whole-heartedly and earnestly prayed to God, "Oh my Creator and Master, either take me away from this world or have pity on me, a miserable sinner, and enable me to have a glimpse of the glory of Thy divine Truth or Reality, so that I may have a new life." For days he waited on God and prayed consistently and earnestly; and at last, according to the divine promise "he who seeks finds" (Matt. 7 : 8), his prayer was answered.

One day, early in the morning, when he sat at the entrance of the cave and was engaged in thinking about his own condition, he noticed that a man was moving in the direction of the cave. When he got sight of the newcomer, many kinds of thoughts began to come to his mind, and he said to himself, "Perhaps, like me, this man has suffered much, is now weary of this world and is wandering about in this jungle in search of some shelter and peace; or it is just

possible that he is a true devotee of God and keeps himself busy in His contemplation and devotion. Perhaps this cave, wherein I am now staying, belongs to him. Or maybe he is some traveller who has lost his way, or perhaps he is a shepherd who has come this side hunting for his lost sheep or goat. No doubt, there is some mystery about him." In a few moments the man reached the cave and greeted the broken-hearted hermit with great affection and sympathy. The hermit at once stood up with all courtesy and solicited the stranger to take his seat on the blanket which he spread on the ground for him.

Seeker: May I have the pleasure of knowing your name, please, and may I also have the privilege of enquiring as to why you have come here and where you have come from?

The Eternal Christ: You cannot understand the meaning and significance of my name. I am the true Shepherd and have "come down from heaven" to seek and save my lost sheep (John 3 : 13).

Though the Seeker-after-truth did not fully understand his remarks, yet the Eternal Christ's personality and words made a deep and wonderful impression on his mind, as if his black heart were illuminated by the stranger's glorious and shining presence, and he realized that he himself was like a lost sheep and stood badly in need of the true Shepherd. Being deeply impressed by His company and presence, the Seeker-after-truth courteously put the following question to the Eternal Christ:

Seeker: For how long have you been doing this work?

The Eternal Christ: Since the beginning of the world.

Seeker: Really? Then it appears to me that you are a prophet. Pray tell me all about yourself, bless me and make me your own disciple.

The Eternal Christ: Though two thousand years have not yet passed since for the sake of the salvation of man, I became manifest in flesh, yet, before that, I existed and am the Eternal and "Everlasting Father" (Isa. 9 : 6; John 14 : 9). I am the "King of Righteousness and Peace" and "Priest". No man can be both king and priest as I am. From the worldly point of view I have "no record of ancestry" (Heb. 7 : 2, 3; Luke 1 : 30–36). Before my Incarnation, I appeared unto all those who loved me. I helped and blessed them (Gen. 14 : 18, 19; John 8 : 56–59 and Dan. 3 : 25), and now I have appeared unto you in answer to your prayer to give you peace, rest and eternal life.

(Having thus felt and realized to the full this reality, the Seeker-after-truth at once threw himself at the feet of the Eternal Christ and could not help exclaiming.)

Seeker: Oh, my God and Father, to-day I have found in Thee the Author and Master of my life. Now I care nothing about my earthly losses because I have got everything. From this day forth I am Thy child and bondservant. Thou art all in all to me in the world. Why

didst Thou so long hide Thyself from me Thy unworthy and miserable servant?

The Eternal Christ: Evidently I did not reveal myself to you until now, because before this you were not ready for this sort of revelation. But, in reality, I was always with you. Besides this my inner revelation in human heart and soul is more essential than my external manifestation. Even the fact of your being subjected to a number of misfortunes has prepared you in a special way because, through the instrumentality of sorrows and sufferings, the seekers after truth are brought near to Me. In this way the capacity of the human soul is expanded and awakened by my presence, in a marvellous way, to the consciousness and enjoyment of divine blessings. Pains and sufferings often enable a man to recognize his shortcomings, and to realize his own needs to such an extent that he begins to seek satisfaction, and finally in Me he finds all his needs supplied.

Seeker: Oh, what a happy man I am! Had all the pores of my body become mouths even then I would have not been able to express my gratitude to Thee, oh my Saviour, as much as I ought to do. Now I know this also that Thou desirest not mere lip-praise but Thou desirest inner gratitude, and the heart in which Thou dwellest is constrained to praise Thee because it ever overflows with joy. Now, oh my Creator and God, forgive my rudeness and perverseness if I dare to ask you one question. Is this precious opportunity in my life merely subjective as the rationalists of this world often think?

I fully believe that this revelation is objective and real.

The Eternal Christ: My son, do not worry about what the learned folks of this world say, because most of them are ungodly and selfish. That is why they think so wrongly and are blind leaders of the blind. Though the Creator has created the whole world which exists in and through Him, yet this creation itself is not God nor is it a part of His existence. But, nevertheless, it does not exist separately or apart from His being. Does it mean then that the creation has no objective form but is merely subjective? Not at all so. In fact all manifestations and spiritual experiences which my people have are not subjective or imaginary but objective and real, and it is, no doubt, an outcome of their intimate fellowship with Me.

Seeker: Oh God, grant that the blessing which I have got to-day may not be lost in any way through my weakness, or indifference, and give me grace that I may be faithful to the end. Grant that I may always remain Thy true servant and live in and for Thee.

The Eternal Christ: It is essential that you should always watch and pray. Never mind if you have lost your earthly wealth. This was to happen sooner or later. But now you have that real wealth which, if you do not lose yourself, no one can ever take away from you. Now you are like that man who sailed in a boat which floated on the surface of a flooded and furious river. The boisterous winds and waves struck against the boat and it sank. The man struggled

and swam safely to the bank, but all his belongings were washed away by the stormy flow of the river except some money which he had in his pocket. When he reached the bank he met some thieves who snatched away from him all he had. In short he lost everything. But he never worried because he had in his mind that real wealth and peace which no human hand could ever take away from him (John 14 : 27). Therefore he praised the Lord, singing the songs of His wonderful goodness, and going away, commenced to do his appointed task.

Now you also should be grateful that the loss of your earthly riches and honour emptied your heart for the reception of real and abiding wealth. "Lo I am with you always", therefore go and "feed my lambs" (John 21 : 15).

The Seeker-after-truth bowed his head with reverence and gratitude and threw himself at the feet of the Eternal Christ who, having blessed him, vanished. He then got up and busied himself heart and soul in the service of the Master.

CHAPTER SEVEN

KNOWLEDGE OF GOD AND SELF

If man knew himself—who and what he is—then he would be able to know Him after whose "image and likeness" he has been created, "for what can be known about God is plain to them" (Romans 1 : 19). But it should be remembered that the knowledge of God and Self does not depend on the learning and "wisdom of this world", because the various "isms" and "ologies" often lead us away from, rather than to, the truth. Mere learning and wisdom of this world may cause the inner voice and feelings to be suppressed, and then a kind of artificial voice is produced, which is always misleading. But real knowledge is obtained by means of prayer and meditation; because then "a flight of the alone to the Alone" takes place, and God speaks in the secret chamber of the heart. In other words, this world's knowledge can be attained by *tuition* but the spiritual knowledge by *intuition* enlightened by God.

In order to obtain spiritual knowledge the soul's powers and inner senses—which on account of sin are benumbed and deadened—should be awakened. There was once a blind man who was about to read his Braille Bible, but on account of the severe cold his finger tips were so benumbed

that he could not read a single word. He then sat beside the fire and began to warm his hands. In a few minutes his fingers glowed with the heat and he was easily able to read. Just so by prayer and meditation the rays of the "Sun of Righteousness" (Mal. 4 : 2) and the fire of the Holy Spirit work in the heart and so quicken or awaken us. By thus knowing ourselves and God we can enjoy His blessed life-giving Presence for ever.

When we become Sons of God by being "born again", then God's Holy Spirit, even without spoken words and earthly language, speaks to us directly, teaching and revealing to us the secrets of the spiritual life. When we are born by the Spirit, spiritual language becomes our mother-tongue, and we learn without difficulty what He teaches us like the child who naturally learns his mother's language. Earthly language and words are only outward means of conveying a meaning; but a spiritual man—like the child —even without words, understands the meaning that God wishes to convey. For example, if we wish to teach a child whose mother-tongue is English the meaning of the Sanskrit word "ISWAR", we tell him that "ISWAR" means "GOD"; but in what language previously did he come to know that "God" is God? It was conveyed to his mind directly without words.

The sun can be seen only in its own light; just so the "Sun of Righteousness" or the "Light of the world" can only be seen in His own light. Man can only know and see himself in this true light, but for this he needs spiritual eyesight,

because the blind and those who "seeing, see not," cannot understand this reality (Matt. 13 : 13).

To know the deity of Christ, we must be men in the real sense of the word, because animal life, however perfect, is not sufficient for this. Sinful and fallen man cannot know Him. But the "new man" and "new creation" (Col. 3 : 10) are essential to know Him "Who is the image of the invisible God" (Col. 1 : 15), and to know himself who was created in that image. On account of sin man's image is disfigured and marred, so that it has to be remade, and only thus can he recognize his Lord and Saviour.

On account of sin man is not only fallen from real dignity and manliness, but is also dead; that is why he does not feel God's presence, who like air, is everywhere present; and, like a dead man, in spite of the air being all around, does not feel or breathe it. In the same way, those dead in sin can neither know God nor enjoy the breath of prayer nor worship Him in spirit and truth. God breathed into Adam "the breath of life" (Gen. 2 : 7) and he became a "living soul", but through sin that "living soul" died; therefore it was necessary that the Lord should breathe again on men new life, which is eternal (John 20 : 22). It is essential that man should turn in true repentance to God, and know his real self as seen in His presence, otherwise the danger is twofold—either he will be deprived of the bliss of God's sweet presence, or being filled with that same presence and His peace he may begin to imagine that he is God himself!

Really to know God and self, and to obtain real life, it is necessary that man should deny himself (Luke 9 : 23, 24); for he who denies his own wishes and will in order to fulfil the Will of God will become satisfied completely, and all the cravings of his soul will be fulfilled in that Will which created him. Otherwise, by walking according to his own will to satisfy himself, he will both destroy it and the capacity to satisfy it. In other words, whosoever denies himself will find God and self and all that he needs, but he who does not deny self, really commits spiritual suicide!

If man, who was created in God's image and likeness, by disobedience and foolishness mars that image, he hurts himself, as the Prodigal Son did. When a man hurts himself to such an extent that his heart and feelings are deadened, then he injures others also. Being deadened himself he does not feel and know that he is hurting others (see 1 Cor. 12 : 12 and 26). Had he been alive and awakened, instead of hurting and injuring himself and others, he would have tried his best to improve his own and others' spiritual life. Thus he would have fulfilled the will and purpose of God in his life.

In this world nobody can escape from some suffering and the Cross; it is necessary to pass through the valley of the shadow of death (Psa. 23 : 4) for a longer or shorter period. But true Christians who bear their Cross "die", yet they "live", and in the midst of persecution are like the leaves of a tree which fall in winter, only to appear in renewed vigour in the spring,

and prove they are really living (2 Cor. 4 : 8–10; 6 : 4–10). In spite of sorrow and suffering their life is hid in God. Like the Gulf Stream, which protects the northern lands from the severe cold by its warm currents of water flowing across the ocean, so the hidden stream of the love of God and the current of the Holy Spirit protect and keep His people joyful and content.

When a man of God knows himself as he is, he realizes that it is all due to the grace of God, and he will not be proud and highminded, although he may be far better than some others.

Man's soul, which is far superior to the mere body, can only work through and manifest itself by the brain, which is a fine sensitive instrument for thinking and doing. Just so the Holy Spirit works and manifests Himself through a regenerated and consecrated life to carry out His purposes for the salvation of others.

The Sun of Righteousness also reveals Himself and works through such personalities, but the pity of it often is that His servants become like the moon, which only reflects the borrowed light from the sun to lighten the dark night, and even so not always. And again it often causes an eclipse by coming in between the earth and the sun. In this way we also sometimes come in between the Sun of Righteousness and the people of this world, and thus leave them in darkness, and bring dishonour also to His Name. Therefore we should be diligent and prayerful, for the Lord said, "If then the light in you is darkness, how great is

the darkness!" (Matt. 6 : 23). Our eyes which are the light of our body, though so very small, can see many things large, small, far and near. If the tiny pupil of the eye be blinded by a cataract, then not only is the darkness great, but there will be nothing else but darkness all around us, and nothing be seen at all. Thus we must take care that the Divine Light may not be obscured in us (Matt. 5 : 16), but "shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven".

This also is necessary that we be like the pearl diver in the ocean, who descends, and may either hold his breath, or breathe through the air tube, connected with the pure atmosphere above water. In the same way we should be in the world, but "not of it". We should not "breathe" in the air of this world, i.e. as Paul says we should "be dead unto the world" and "alive unto God". We may "breathe" in the Holy Spirit through the "tube" of prayer, and so live for ever.

Thus we should KNOW ourselves; and when we know ourselves we shall know our needs also, and try our best wholeheartedly to know Him, in whom all our needs can be fully and completely satisfied for ever. "The world has not known God" nor knows Him; but "they" know Him and also those to whomsoever Christ, the Incarnation of Love, will reveal Him (John 17 : 25; Matt. 11 : 27).

CHAPTER EIGHT

GENERAL

Nature is Full of Praise for God but not Man

In order to understand the writings and speeches of philosophers and learned men it is necessary first to know their technical terms. But in order to understand God's book, Nature, eyesight alone is sufficient; "Oh clever man, the leaves of trees which appear green to the eyes are in reality the leaves of the book of God's revelation." The powerful speech of rivers, brooks, springs, mountains, fruits and flowers melts even the hard-hearted, provided their ears are kept open. The whole of creation seems to be loudly praising God. On hearing this, one begins to bemoan the condition of unfortunate mankind, that mute creation extols Him, laughing and with gratitude, but man, on whom is bestowed a tongue half a foot long, remains with his tongue tied. Oh man, sharp-tongued, you are eloquent in idle talk, but you are without speech in praise of your Creator and Lord. Woe, hundred times woe!

The Word of God is Spirit and is Life

It is now about a quarter of a century since this precious Book introduced me to its Author, and all this time I have found my Saviour to

be exactly the same as recorded in this Book. He has been to me all that we read concerning Him there. Language difficulties and textual criticism have not hidden its truths nor hindered in the least its life-giving influence in my heart because of these words: "They are spirit and they are life".

In reading the Bible I have found such untold and eternal wealth of riches, of which I never thought nor dreamed before, and now in passing on its message to others and sharing it with them, its blessing to me and to them continually increases.

The Water of Life

In 1922, when travelling in Palestine with a friend, I was greatly refreshed by drinking the sweet and soothing water of a famous well [Jacob's Well]. An hour or two later I was again thirsty, and those words of our Lord came forcibly to my mind: "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst; the water that I shall give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life" (John 4 : 13, 14). I had just drunk of a well that men had dug and was again thirsty. In all humility and thankfulness I can say that during the two decades since I gave my heart to Christ and drank of that water which He gave me, I have never been thirsty because He is indeed the Fountain of Life.

St. John's Gospel is the Bread of Life

When I was travelling in the Central Provinces, I was talking to some non-Christians about our living Saviour. I finished speaking, and I asked those people if any one would like to read the Bible to know something more about Jesus Christ. There was a man there, an enemy of Christianity. He took a copy of St. John's Gospel. He read two or three sentences, and then straightway tore it into pieces and threw it away. This was in a compartment in the train. After two years I heard a wonderful story. The same day that this man took St. John's Gospel and tore it up into pieces and threw it out of the window, a seeker after truth was going along the railway line. He found the torn pieces of the Gospel, and he took them up and began to read. He saw the words "everlasting life". According to Hinduism it may be true that we are not going to die, but that we shall live through transmigration, and come back again into this world. But "everlasting life"! Then in another piece of the Gospel he saw the words "the bread of life". He was anxious to know something about it. What was that bread of life? He showed the pieces to another man and said to him, "Can you tell me what this book is? I am sorry that somebody tore it up." The man said, "That is a Christian book. You must not read it. You will be defiled. You must not read such books." At last he said, "I must know something more. There is no danger in knowing more about these things." He went and bought a copy of the New Testament and began to read it—and

he found our Saviour. Really the torn pieces of St. John's Gospel proved to be a piece of the living bread—the Bread of Life.

We must Believe though we do not see

Once on a journey in the hills of India, I sat down to rest on a rock. Below the rock was a bush in which was a nest from which came the cry of the young birds. The mother-bird had come with food, and, as soon as they heard the rustling of her wings, they began to cry out. When the mother had given them food and had flown away, they were quiet again. I examined the nest and found, to my surprise, that they were not old enough to have their eyes open, yet without seeing their mother they opened their mouth at her approach. They did not say, "Until we see our mother or our food, we will not open our mouth, for we do not know if it is our mother or an enemy; or whether she brings food or poison." If they had acted on this principle they would certainly have had no opportunity to eat and to see, for before their eyes were opened they would have died of hunger. They did not doubt their mother's love, but took on faith what she brought. After a few days, when their eyes were open, they were happy in seeing their dear mother and, growing stronger and stronger in her likeness, before long were able to fly away. Are not men, the highest of God's creatures, inferior to these insignificant nestlings, for often we have doubts about the existence and love of our heavenly Father? Jesus said, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe" (John 20 : 29).

Life and Life Abundant

A man was so sick that he was unable to move in his bed. Hands and feet were paralysed. Then a poisonous snake came and since he was unable to flee, it bit him and he died. Some Christians have life, but not enough to save themselves. Christ came to give us life in such fulness that we can escape from sin. In order to become partakers of this life, we must be prepared to forsake all and follow Him.

Eternal Life begins here and now

The Lord says that His words are spirit and life. Every true Christian feels in his personal experience and observation that really the Word of God is making alive the dead hearts of the people of every condition and caste. The sacred books of other religions teach that, if we spend a prayerful and abstemious life here, we shall have eternal life hereafter. But if we do not get eternal life now, then hope for the future is hopeless. Praised be the Lord who gives life in this world as well as the heavenly eternal life, and makes the heart of the faithful a paradise by sending His Spirit. This is the proof that we will have eternal life hereafter.

Understanding only after Experience

Travelling in the Himalayas, among the perpetual snow and where everything is frozen, I came across some hot springs and told a man about them. He would not believe until he had felt the water; and then he said that there must be a fire in the mountain. His brain began to

help him to understand. He had had experience. We cannot understand until we have spiritual experience, and that comes through prayer.

Prayer the hidden Root

In a certain desert, where there was no sign of water, there was a tree with green leaves bearing fruit. The reason was that the long roots of the tree found a secret spring of water deep under the ground and thus were nourished by it. Prayer is the hidden root which goes to the hidden spring which is God. Through prayer we receive life from God and strength to bear fruit.

Dead Churches

In Palestine I was standing near the River Jordan and thought: "This water, this fresh, sweet water is flowing all the time into the Dead Sea, but that Sea still remains dead, because it is not sending out streams." So there are some Christian Churches which are dead. The fresh water from Jesus Christ is flowing into them all the time, and still they are dead. Why? Because they are not giving out to others.

You have only one Heart; Give it to God

You have only one heart. If you had two, you could give one to the world; but since you have only one, give that to the Lord and you will receive Him and with Him everything.

Thee alone do I Desire

My Lord God, my all in all, life of my life, and spirit of my spirit, look in mercy upon me

and so fill me with Thy Holy Spirit that my heart shall have no room for love of aught but Thee. I seek from Thee no other gift but Thyself, who art the Giver of life and all its blessings. From Thee I ask not for the world or its treasures, nor yet for heaven even make request, but Thee alone do I desire and long for, and where Thou art there is Heaven. The hunger and the thirst of this heart of mine can be satisfied only with Thee who hast given it birth. O Creator mine! Thou hast created my heart for Thyself alone, and not for another; therefore this my heart can find no rest or ease save in Thee, in Thee who hast both created it and set in it this very longing for rest. Take away then from my heart all that is opposed to Thee, and enter and abide and rule for ever. Amen.

THE AUTHOR

Dr. A. J. Appasamy

Dr. A. J. Appasamy, Bishop in Coimbatore, is one of the leading scholars of the Indian Church. He is at work on a full-length biography of Sadhu Sundar Singh, which will be completed shortly. This little book contains some of the fruits of many years' research into the life and writings of the Sadhu.